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SUBJECT: PART 2 OF 3: A LOOK AT JACOB ZUMA'S CABINET

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1B. PRETORIA 000988

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Summary

11. (SBU) President Jacob Zuma finalized his Cabinet appointments on May 10, modifying several existing ministries and creating a few new ones. Below are short biographies for each of the newly appointed ministers and deputies. This is the second of three cables looking at each of the Cabinet appointees. End Summary.

Cabinet Appointees

12. (SBU) Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande is largely seen as an opportunist from the South African Communist Party (SACP) who had fallen out of favor during the President Thabo Mbeki administration. He was a key figure in Zuma's rise as African National Congress (ANC) leader at the ruling party's congress in December 2007 because he saw the former Deputy President as an ally who could propel him to power. Nzimande also was a vocal critic of former President Kgalema Motlanthe, whom he called "a member of the old crowd." He serves as the General Secretary of the SACP, a position he has held since 1998. He only joined the SACP in 1989, however, years after he began his activist career. He also serves on both the ANC's National Executive Committee and the ANC's National Working Committee. Nzimande is steeped in the Black Consciousness Movement, having started his university career in 1976. He enrolled and graduated from the University of Zululand in the late 1970s before joining the Azanian People's Organization -- which eventually broke from the Black Consciousness Movement. After finishing a Masters degree in 1980, Nzimande moved to Durban where he met, and became friends with, Jay Naidoo. His friendship with Naidoo led him to become increasingly involved in trade union politics. Nzimande began teaching at the University of Natal in the mid-1980s and held clandestine Marxist study working groups during his time as a lecturer. He was born in 1958.

13. (SBU) Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has one of the toughest positions in the Cabinet because the Home Affairs ministry is notoriously mismanaged and poorly run. She is widely expected to clean up the department's practices. Dlamini-Zuma served as Foreign Affairs minister

from 1999 to 2009. Prior to appointment as a senior diplomat, Dlamini-Zuma served as Minister of Health from 1994 to 1999. She was asked to serve as Deputy President following Mbeki's decision to fire Zuma in 2005, but she declined after talking with her family. Ahead of the ruling party's congress in 2007, it was rumored that she would be a candidate for the presidency. However, she said publicly that she "had not entered the succession debate in the ANC." Viewed as a compromise candidate, Dlamini-Zuma was nominated for the position of ANC Deputy President by four provinces aligned to Mbeki and five provinces aligned to Zuma during the ANC's congress in 2007. She serves as a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee. Dlamini-Zuma became active in the ANC in the 1970s, serving as an underground member of the party and in the South African Students Organization -- where she served as deputy president in 1976.

She fled into exile following the Soweto students' uprising and completed a degree in medical studies from the University of Bristol. She was working as a doctor in Swaziland when she met her future husband, Jacob Zuma. (Note: The couple divorced in 1998). In 1985, she returned to the United Kingdom and worked for the ANC Regional Health Committee. She was born in 1949.

14. (U) Deputy Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba has held the position since 2004. He previously was elected ANC Youth League President in 1996, 1998, and 2001. Gigaba served in Parliament from 1999 to 2001 and rose through youth organizations during the 1990s. He joined the SACP in 1990. Loyal to the Zuma crowd in KwaZulu Natal, Gigaba has been plagued by scandal since becoming Deputy Home Affairs Minister. He has admitted to misappropriating public funds, and once used public money to buy airline tickets from participants in the Malusi Gigaba Leadership Institute. He

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also once charged the Department of Home Affairs for flowers that he sent to his wife. Gigaba holds degrees in education and social policy from the University of Durban-Westville. He earned a medal from the Cuban Government for his activism in youth issues in 2002. He was born in 1971 and is married. He enjoys watching soccer, jogging, and working out.

15. (U) Human Settlement Minister Tokyo Sexwale is one of South Africa's leading businessmen and previously served as Gauteng premier from 1994 to 1998. Sexwale openly sought the ANC's nomination as party leader ahead of the ANC's December 2007 party congress, but switched his support to Zuma when it became apparent that the former Deputy President had the votes to win. Rumored to be a frontrunner for the foreign affairs ministry, Sexwale will instead steer the portfolio in charge of housing. Sexwale has chaired, or held a stake in, many of the country's leading firms, including: Arcus Gibb, Rand Mutual Group of Companies, Trans Hex Group, MOCOH Energy, Northam Platinum, and Mvelaphanda Holdings (which he resigned from following his acceptance of the Human Settlement ministry). He has served as a director of Altech, De Montfort University, Desta Power Matla, Voltex, Gold Field, and the 2010 World Cup Preparatory Committee. From 2001 to 2008, he served as a non-executive director of ABSA. His community activities include working as a trustee for the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Global Philanthropists Circle, the Robben Island Ex-Prisoners Trust, and the Business Trust.

A longtime ANC member, Sexwale served as an ex-officio member of the party's executive committee from 1991 to 1997. He chaired the ANC's military headquarters from 1990 to 1991 and worked on special projects for the party prior to the 1994 election. He was a member of the Black Consciousness Movement beginning in the late 1960s and joined the ANC's underground movement in the 1970s. He went into exile in the Soviet Union and underwent military officer training in 1975.

In 1978, he was convicted and charged with terrorism and conspiracy to overthrow the South African state. He spent 13 years in prison at Robben Island before his release. Sexwale was born in 1953 and has two children. He enjoys reading and

watching sports.

16. (U) Deputy Human Settlement Minister Zoliswa Albertina Kota-Fredericks, a member of Parliament since 1994, served as longtime chair of the Housing Portfolio Committee. She has been an ANC provincial executive committee member since 1992 and served as the ANC Women's League Provincial chair in Western Cape beginning in 2003. There is not a substantial amount of information available on Kota-Fredericks, but she began her activism in the 1970s and was in exile at various points in Lesotho, Angola, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Zimbabwe. She was the public secretary for the United Democratic Front in 1983 before escaping the country. She served in the ANC's diplomatic mission in Cuba from 1987 to 1991 before returning to chair the ANC's election activities in Western Cape.

17. (SBU) International Relations Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane was perhaps the biggest surprise of Zuma's Cabinet selections as many did not anticipate the appointment. According to local South African observers, Qappointment. According to local South African observers, including Iqbal Jhazbhay, Nkoana-Mashabane is "warmer than Dlamini-Zuma" and would be nicer to work for. (Note: There also are rumors that she is a "screamer" and difficult to work for. Yolanda Kemp Spies said she was a horrible High Commissioner, but still not as difficult as Dlamini-Zuma. End Note.) Jhazbhay told Poloff that "she did not need to be a great leader because she will continue the same policies." She reportedly gets along well with one of her deputies, Ebrahim Ebrahim. She traveled with Zuma last year to China and India. Nkoana-Mashabane, a former activist in the United Democratic Front, served as South African High Commissioner to India and Malaysia before serving in Parliament on foreign affairs. She served in India from 1999 to 2005 and in Malaysia from 1995 to 1999. Jhazbhay said that Zuma wants to improve relations with Angola (one of his first trips as ANC President was to Angola, and Nkoana-Mashabane made Luanda her first international visit) and he views Nkoana-Mashabane as an effective broker with Luanda. Jhazbhay noted that on Zimbabwe, he sees Zuma and Nkoana-Mashabane playing "good cop, bad cop," with the South African foreign ministry and government being the "good cop" and COSATU and SACP being the "bad cop." Nkoana-Mashabane's husband, who died in a 2007 car accident, was investigated -- and cleared -- on sexual

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harassment charges stemming from his time as South African High Commissioner in Indonesia. He was found guilty by a DFA departmental disciplinary committee on 21 counts of sexual harassment but Dlamini-Zuma cleared him because she believed his story that he was being framed. At least one of the victims pressed charges and they settled the case out of court. After her tours of duty in India and Malaysia, Nkoana-Mashabane served as Member in the Executive Council for housing and local government in Limpopo and was influential in drawing support to Zuma in her capacity as Deputy Secretary General of the ANC in Limpopo.

18. (SBU) Deputy International Relations Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim was long rumored to be positioned as South Africa's Foreign Minister, but will serve under Nkoana-Mashabane instead. According to Zuma adviser Mo Shaik, Ebrahim had two things against him - his age and an overly ambitious wife. Ebrahim is quiet in person and small in stature. He joined the liberation movement in 1952 and participated in the Congress of the People campaign, which adopted the Freedom Charter in 1955. He was active in all major campaigns against the apartheid during the 1950s. After the ANC was banned, he joined the armed wing of the ANC -- Umkhonto we Sizwe ("MK"). In 1961, he was arrested and charged under the Sabotage Act with 18 others in the Pietermaritzburg sabotage trial. He was sentenced to 15 years at Robben Island. Following his release in 1979, he was banned and his movements restricted. He went into exile in 1980 and operated on the frontlines for the MK in Swaziland and

Zimbabwe. In 1986, he was kidnapped from Swaziland by the South African security forces and charged with high treason. He was sentenced to another 20 years on Robben Island. In 1991, he was released from jail and then elected to the ANC's National Executive Committee. He became a member of Parliament in 1994 and chaired Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. He resigned, however, in 2002 to become a political adviser. Following Zuma's win as ANC President in 2007, Ebrahim worked in Luthuli House on international relations. He was born in 1937 in Durban and holds a degree from the University of South Africa.

¶19. (SBU) Deputy International Relations Minister Sue van der Merwe has served in this capacity since 2004. She joined Parliament as an ANC member in 1996, and held positions on a number of committees. Her portfolios included Finance, Communication, Environment and Tourism, and the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. She served as the ANC's Whip from 1999 to 2000, and from 2001 to 2004, she served as Parliamentary Councilor to the President of South Africa. She began her political career as coordinator for the Black Sash Advice Office in Cape Town in 1988. She was born in 1954 and enjoys running.

¶10. (SBU) Justice and Constitutional Development Minister Jeff Radebe is one of Zuma's staunchest supporters and drafted a highly inflammatory letter to former ANC Chairperson Mosiuoa Lekota after Lekota criticized the ANC's political direction last year. His move from the Transport ministry to the Justice and Constitutional Development ministry is a sign that Radebe may be seeking to position himself to follow Zuma as ANC leader. (Note: The Transport Qhimself to follow Zuma as ANC leader. (Note: The Transport ministry is increasingly coming under fire from taxi drivers and businessmen who are angry that the government is seeking to implement a rapid bus transport system. Away from the fire, Radebe may come under less public criticism. End Note.) Moreover, a spot in the Justice and Constitutional Development ministry guarantees that Radebe will be lauded by political observers if the ANC opts to leave the Constitution unchanged (which the party has promised to do, but many in the opposition used the contrary as a campaign theme) and the courts free of political cronies. Radebe has been a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee and a member of the ANC's National Working Committee since 1991. He also retains his membership on the SACP's Central Committee and chairs the ANC's policy unit. Along with Sexwale, Radebe has been a board member for the 2010 World Cup Preparatory Committee -- a capacity in which he lobbied strongly for the rapid bus transport system. He began his political career as a student activist during his days at the University of Zululand in the late 1970s. He joined the underground movement of the ANC in 1976 and left for Mozambique in 1977 for training as an MK member. He was a radio journalist in Dar es Salaam for two years and worked in the ANC International Department in

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Zambia. He spent years creating underground ANC and SACP structures in South Africa and Lesotho as an MK member; he was arrested in Johannesburg in 1986 for these activities and served 5 years at Robben Island. Upon his release, Radebe served politically in SACP's leadership core and as chair of the ANC's southern Natal regional branches. During his time in these positions, he helped propel Zuma to the premiership of KwaZulu Natal. Radebe was born in 1953 and is married.

¶11. (U) Justice and Constitutional Development Deputy Minister Andries Nel has quietly climbed the ranks of the ANC since he joined Parliament in 1994. There is little information available on Nel's political career or life as he is noted as "shy and reserved," but he first gained prominence in the early 2000s as a Deputy Chief Whip of the ANC in Parliament and then as acting Chief Whip of the party, a position he first held in 2007. He is longtime member of the ANC's regional executive committee of Tshwane. Nel's father was a loyal servant under the Nationalist Government

during apartheid. Nel studied at the University of Pretoria and earned a law degree before becoming a human rights lawyer. He married an American in 2005 and the wedding was featured in the New York Times.

¶12. (SBU) Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana has held this position since 1998 and has been well-documented. He has been a member of Parliament since 1994 and a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee since 1998. In Parliament, he was a member of the Portfolio Committee on Education from 1994 to 1996 and the Home Affairs Committee from 1994 to 1996. He was a whip of the Parliamentary Programming Committee from 1995 to 1998. In the 1980s, he became involved in the labor movement. He served as chair of the Democratic Teachers Union, which stemmed from his experience as a high school principal in Cape Town. From 1990 to 1994, he served as National President of the Democratic Teachers Union. From 1994 to 1998, he served as National President of the South African Democratic Teachers Union, which propelled him to his position as Labour Minister. He earned a Bachelors degree from the University of South Africa in 1997. He was born in 1952 in Eastern Cape.

¶13. (SBU) Mining Minister Susan Shabangu served as Deputy Minister of Mining and Energy from 1996 to 2004. More recently, she served as Deputy Minister for Safety and Security, where she came to prominence one year ago when she urged police to shoot criminals to curb the nation's high incidence of crime. Shabangu has a strong union and ANC background and is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee. (Note: See Septel for more information on how the mining community sees Shabangu. End Note.)

¶14. (U) Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa previously served as the Chief Whip of the ANC. One of former President Thabo Mbeki's staunchest critics, he has been in Parliament since 2002 and is currently a member of the NEC and the ANC's National Working Committee. Prior to Polokwane he was a key lobbyist for Jacob Zuma's bid to become party leader; he was accused of being one of the leaders responsible for organizing party members bused in to boo former Mbeki. He was elected to the NEC of the ANC's Youth League in 1994 and was elected to the NEC of the ANC's Youth League in 1994 and served in its National Working Committee as Secretary for Organization from 1994 to 2004. He was deployed to the ANC's National Organizing team in 2001 and served as chairman of the Minerals and Energy Portfolio Committee in 2004. He has ties to the labor movement, having served in 1989 as chairman of the Southern Natal Unemployed Workers Union, an initiative of COSATU. Mthethwa was recruited into underground work for the ANC as part of Operation Vula. He has extensive ties to the ANC in KwaZulu Natal, which he has capitalized on as chairman of the ANC's Political Committee in KwaZulu Natal. He has in the past denied meeting requests from the Consul General in Durban. He is known for his tough talk and militancy. He was born on January 23, 1967 and is married. He enjoys writing and sports.

¶15. (SBU) Deputy Police Minister Fikile Mbalula's appointment is not without controversy. As one pundit quipped, "Mbalula's only past experiences with policing probably are not good ones." He headed the ANC's 2009 election campaign and is a longtime ANC Youth League leader. He first served politically as leader of the Botshabelo Youth

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Congress from 1986 to 1987. He became an area member of the United Democratic Front in 1989 and secretary of the ANC Provisional Youth Committee in 1990. He served as a regional secretary of the ANC Youth League from 1991 to 1994, as a provincial secretary in the Free State from 1994 to 1996, as chair of political education from 1996 to 1998, and as secretary general from 1998 to 2004. From 2004 to 2008, he was President of the ANC Youth League and lead the organization during its controversial dealings with Brett

Kebble. The Lembede Investment Holdings firm -- the league's financial arm -- has been controversial since at least 2000 because of how quickly it grew and because it received a significant capital injection from the late mining baron Kebble. The firm reportedly holds more than 12 million dollars. Last year, current ANC Youth League President Julius Malema began angling for greater control of the firm in the name of "pushing away old comrades who became millionaires in the name of youth." Mbalula is an affiliate member of Socialist International and has been trained in psychotherapy. He was born in 1971.

End Part Two
LA LIME